

2012 YOAB Survey on Youth Issues and Needs: Findings from the Targeted Sample of Latino Youth

**Prepared for:
City of Boulder Youth Opportunities Advisory Board**

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Key Findings

The City of Boulder Youth Opportunities Advisory Board (YOAB) developed a questionnaire in order to identify the issues and needs of greatest importance to middle school and high schools students in Boulder. There were two data collection efforts. The questionnaire was initially mailed in the summer of 2012 to a random sample of 4,000 home addresses of Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) middle and high school students who were enrolled in the 2011-12 school year. Because of the small number of Latino respondents, the questionnaire was distributed to a targeted sample of Latino students who attended City of Boulder BVSD middle and high schools. This second data collection yielded 97 respondents. The findings of the targeted survey are summarized in this report.

- The issue most frequently rated as needing “lots more attention” was job opportunities for teens.
- Other issues frequently rated as needing “lots more attention” were bullying, places for youth to meet/hang out, youth alcohol/drug use, information on how to look for jobs and how to apply for/interview for jobs, and stress caused by/at school. Safety at night, the cost of RTD bus fares, and various forms of disrespect were also frequently indicated.
- The issues most frequently indicated by students as top-three priorities were transportation, health, bullying, life after high school, and job opportunities for teens.
- The findings in the 2011 YRBS survey of BVSD middle and high school students on topics that were related to the YOAB survey – bullying and disrespect, mental health issues, youth alcohol/drug use, and safety -- were consistent with and supported the YOAB findings.
- Nearly 60% of respondents indicated that they would use an on-line youth space that included such items as events listings, resource information, and volunteer opportunities.
- The most common aspects about living in Boulder that respondents liked best were the large number of activities and opportunities for youth, the people in and friendliness of the community, and good schools and educational opportunities.

Study Purpose

The City of Boulder Youth Opportunities Advisory Board (YOAB) developed a questionnaire in order to identify the issues and needs of greatest importance to middle and high school students in Boulder. The questionnaire asked about 48 issues/needs in nine categories:

- Activities
- Social
- Health
- Work/Service
- Artistic Expression
- Environment
- Transportation
- Life After High School
- Budgeting/Time Management/Project Planning

How the Data Were Collected

There were two data collection efforts. The questionnaire was initially mailed in the summer of 2012 to a random sample of 4,000 home addresses of Boulder Valley School District (BVSD) middle and high school students who were enrolled in the 2011-12 school year. The sample was selected from all public middle schools and high schools located in the City of Boulder, including charter and alternative schools and the district's on-line middle/high school, although the students did not necessarily live in Boulder. The BVSD Department of Planning and Assessment provided the student sample.

A total of 506 questionnaires were completed and returned, for a response rate of 12.7%. Although gender and school level were very similar between survey respondents and enrolled students, the survey was completed by a higher percentage of white non-Latinos and a lower percentage of Latinos compared to their percentages among enrolled students.¹ The fact that there were only 33 Latino respondents limited separate analysis of that group of students. As a result, the questionnaire was distributed to a targeted sample of Latino students who attended City of Boulder BVSD middle and high schools. These students were usually known to YOAB members and had not completed the first survey. This second data collection yielded 97 respondents.

Responses from the random and targeted samples were not combined because results from the random sample are generalizable to the entire population of City of Boulder BVSD middle and high school students (plus or minus errors due to random sampling), while results from the targeted sample represent only students who completed the survey and cannot be generalized to a larger population. The following report summarizes the results of the targeted sample. The results of both samples are summarized in a separate report.

¹ Statistical tests determined that the overrepresentation of white non-Latinos and underrepresentation of Latinos among survey respondents were not large enough to affect the overall results.

Study Limitations

- The results of the targeted sample are not generalizable to a population of youth beyond those who completed the survey.
- A relatively large number of respondents in the targeted sample, nearly 20%, did not answer the question on gender (Table 1).² This limitation did not apply to the random sample.³

Table 1. Demographic characteristics and missing values, targeted sample of Latino students

	Number	%
Total	97	100%
Gender		
Females	50	51.5%
Males	28	28.9%
Missing values	19	19.6%
School level		
Middle school	59	60.8%
High school	38	39.2%

² The same was initially true of school level; 17.5% of the 97 respondents did not answer that question. However, YOAB was able to obtain the missing information on school level at a later date.

³ In the random sample, only 21 of 506 respondents (4.2%) did not respond to the question on school level and 29 (5.7%) did not respond to the question on gender.

Issues Needing “Lots More Attention”

The issues most frequently rated as needing “lots more attention” by Latino students in the targeted sample were similar to those among Latino students in the random sample, although the ordering was not necessarily the same (Figure 1):

- Job opportunities was most frequently rated as needing “lots more attention” by both groups (55.9% of targeted sample and 69.7% of random sample of Latino students).
- Other issues frequently rated as needing “lots more attention” by both groups were:
 - Bullying (55.3% of targeted sample and 45.5% of random sample of Latino students)
 - Youth alcohol/drug use (43.0% of targeted sample and 60.6% of random sample of Latino students)
 - Information on how to look for jobs (43.0% of targeted sample and 48.5% of random sample of Latino students) and on how to apply and interview for jobs (43.0% of targeted sample and 57.6% of random sample of Latino students)
 - Stress caused by/at school (43.0% of targeted sample and 42.4% of random sample of Latino students)
 - Information on how to help depressed youth (40.4% of targeted sample and 36.4% of random sample of Latino students)
 - Cost of bus passes/bus fares (39.8% of targeted sample and 33.3% of random sample of Latino students)
- The only issue for which there was a substantial difference between the two groups was “places for youth to meet/hang out”, rated as needing “lots more attention” by 44.0% of the targeted sample and only 25.0% of the random sample of Latino youth.
- There were differences in the targeted sample in issues rated as needing “lots more attention” by middle and high school students, although for both groups, job opportunities was a major priority (Figures 2 and 3 and Appendix Table A-1).
 - Youth alcohol/drug use was rated as needing “lots more attention” by 50.9% of middle school students compared to 31.6% of high school students.
 - Among middle school students, bullying was most frequently rated as needing “lots more attention”, by 58.2%, compared to 46.0% of high school students.
 - Places for youth to meet/hang out was rated as needing “lots more attention” by 51.4% of high school students and 39.3% of middle school students.
 - Safety at night and safety walking to/from RTD bus stops and on RTD buses were more likely to be rated as needing “lots more attention” by middle school students than by high school students.
 - Not surprisingly, issues related to post-high school options were more likely to be rated as needing “lots more attention” by high school students than by middle school students.
- The issues most frequently rated as needing “lots more attention” were similar between males and females: job opportunities, bullying, places for youth to meet/hang out, and youth alcohol/drug use (Figures 4 and 5).
- Thirty-one students offered suggestions of other youth issues needing attention. The most frequent was “help with school”, by 16.1% (Table 2).

There were no issues that more than about a third of students in the targeted sample rated as needing “no attention”, indicating that most students believed that every issue needed at least some attention (Appendix Table A-2). Among both middle and high school students and the total sample, the items most likely to be rated as needing “no attention” were:

- Cost of movie tickets, by 30.1% of all students

- Safety on RTD buses and walking to/from RTD bus stops, by 29.7% and 29.4% of all students, respectively
- Disrespect based on gender, by 29.4% of all students
- High school students partying at CU/The Hill, by 29.0% of all students
- Education about environmental issues, by 28.7% of all students
- Opportunities to display art work, by 28.3% of all students

Top Three Priorities

A somewhat different picture emerged when students in the targeted sample were asked to choose their top three priorities out of all the issues listed in the questionnaire.

- The general category of transportation (which included cost of bus passes/bus fares, bus routes/schedules, safety on RTD buses, safety walking to/from RTD bus stops, and inadequate parking at schools) was most frequently indicated as one of the top three priorities, by 31.9% of all students and 34.6% of middle school students in the targeted sample (Figure 7 and 8).⁴
- Other issues frequently listed as among the top three priorities, by about one-quarter of all students and of middle school students in the targeted sample, were: bullying and the general category of health (which included negative body image, stress caused by/at school, stress outside of school, knowing how to deal with stress, youth depressed or suicidal, information on how to help depressed youth, youth sexual health, and how to access youth sexual health services).
- Life after high school was also frequently listed as among the top three priorities by all students and high school students in the targeted sample and job opportunities, by all students and middle school students.
- The most frequent top-three priorities among both males and females in the targeted sample were (Figures 8 and 9):
 - Transportation
 - Bullying
 - Life after high school
 - Job opportunities
- Health was most frequently listed by females, but not by males, as among the top three priorities. Youth alcohol/drug use was also frequently indicated by females as a top-three priority.

Most Frequent Suggestions for Addressing Top Three Priorities

Suggestions for addressing the issues most frequently indicated as top-three priorities – transportation, life after high school, health, bullying, and teen job opportunities -- are summarized in Table 3.

Transportation

Reducing the cost of bus fare to school or in general and providing school bus passes were the most frequent suggestions.

Life after high school

Although life after high school was a frequent priority, there were few specific suggestions. One student suggested more information about college and another suggested help studying in preparation for college.

Health

Learning about your body and clubs or workshops about health were the most frequent suggestions.

⁴ With only 17 high school students answering the questions on top-three priorities, there were too few responses to analyze.

Bullying

Talking to teens about bullying or to the bullies themselves, education on bullying prevention, and clubs/workshops about bullying were the most frequent suggestions.

Teen job opportunities

As with most of the other priorities, more information and clubs were most frequently suggested.

How These Findings Relate to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey Findings

The most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), conducted in November 2011, asked BVSD middle and high school students from both school districts in Boulder County about their risk-related beliefs and behavior. The YRBS findings on topics related to the YOAB survey were consistent with and supported the findings in the targeted sample.⁵

Bullying and disrespect

- Bullying was the most frequently mentioned issue needing “lots more attention” among middle school students in the targeted sample (58.2%), one of the most frequently mentioned issues among both males and females, and one of the top three priorities by almost one-quarter of all students and of middle school students. In addition, various forms of disrespect (by adults or based on sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, age, body shape/size, gender, or lack of money) were rated as issues needing “lots more attention” by a third to more than 40% of all students, males, females, and high school and middle school students in the targeted sample.
- The 2011 YRBS found that 42.9% of BVSD middle school students had been bullied at school on at least one occasion. Latino students and white non-Latino middle school students in that survey reported similar rates of bullying. A lower, although still substantial percentage of BVSD high school students – 1 in 4 – reported having been harassed at school in the past year, with white non-Latinos having a slightly higher rate than Latinos (26.8% compared to 20.1%). However, Latino students reported higher rates of harassment on their way to or from school than did white non-Latino students (12.7% compared to 8.7%) and of harassment because of race or ethnic origin (7.5% compared to 2.2%).

Mental health issues

- School-related stress was indicated by about half of females and high school students and nearly 40% of middle school students as an issue needing “lots more attention”. In addition, how to deal with stress, how to help depressed kids, and youth feeling depressed or suicidal were indicated by nearly 40% or more of high school students and both males and females as issues needing “lots more attention”, depending on the indicator. The general category of health (which included negative body image, stress caused by/at school or outside of school, knowing how to deal with stress, youth depressed or suicidal, information on how to help depressed youth, youth sexual health, and how to access youth sexual health services) was among the top three priorities for females and middle school students.
- In the YRBS, Latino high school students reported higher rates of symptoms of depression than did white non-Latinos: self-harm in the past year (25.5% compared to 20.1%), feeling sad or hopeless nearly every day for at least two weeks in the past year (30.2% compared to 24.6%), seriously considering attempting suicide in the past year (18.7% compared to 11.5%), and attempting suicide in the past year (10.1% compared to 5.7%). The same was true of middle school students. Latino middle school students reported higher rates than did white non-Latinos of seriously considering attempting suicide (18.3% compared to 11.3%) and ever attempting suicide (6.6% compared to 1.6%).

⁵ YRBS results for BVSD middle and high schools are presented since results for City of Boulder schools are not available.

Youth alcohol/drug use

- Youth alcohol/drug use was indicated by more than half of middle school students and males and about 4 in 10 high school students and females as an issue needing “lots more attention”.
- The YRBS found that Latino high school students were substantially more likely to have been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property in the past year than were white non-Latinos (43.2% compared to 30.9%).⁶

Safety

- Safety at night was an issue identified as needing “lots more attention” by more than 4 in 10 middle school students and more than 1 in 3 females in the targeted sample, and safety walking to/from RTD bus stops and on RTD buses, by almost 4 in 10 middle school students.
- In the YRBS, Latino high school students were substantially less likely to report feeling safe in their neighborhood than were white non-Latinos (83.4% compared to 93.0%), although Latinos were not less likely to go to school in the past month because they felt unsafe (4.7% of all BVSD high school students).⁷ The higher rates of harassment on the way to or from school and because of race or ethnic origin reported by Latino high school students than by white non-Latinos in the YRBS further support the YOAB findings.

Use of On-Line Youth Space

Nearly 60% (57.7%) of all students in the targeted sample indicated that they would use on-line youth space that included such items as events listings, resource information, and volunteer opportunities (Figure 10). A higher percentage of females than males and of middle school students than high school students indicated that they would use the on-line space.

Like Best About Being a Youth in Boulder

Almost two-thirds of respondents answered the question about what they liked best about being a youth in Boulder (Table 4). The most common responses were: 1) the large number of activities and opportunities for youth and 2) the people in and friendliness of the community or the community in general, each of which was indicated by 19.0% of students in the targeted sample. Good schools/educational opportunities was next most frequent, by 17.5% of students.

⁶ That question was not asked in the middle school YRBS.

⁷ Those questions were not asked in the middle school YRBS.

Tables and Figures

Figure 1. Most frequently mentioned issues needing “lots more attention”: Targeted sample of Latino students and random sample of Latino students

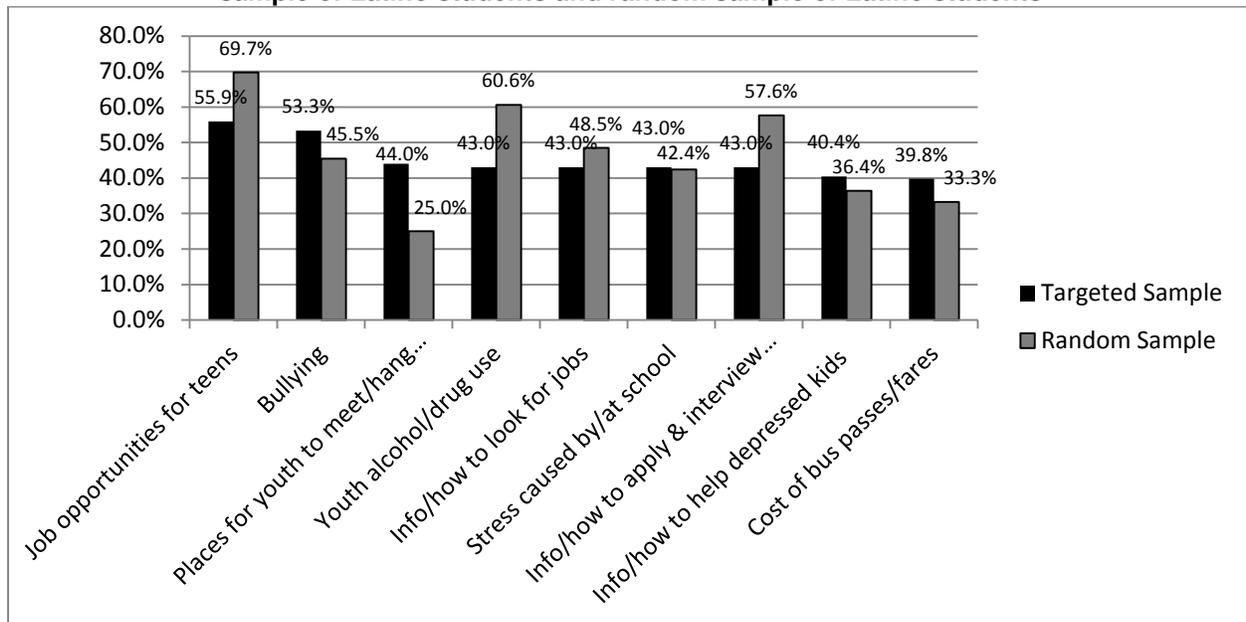


Figure 2. Most frequently mentioned issues needing “lots more attention”, middle school students

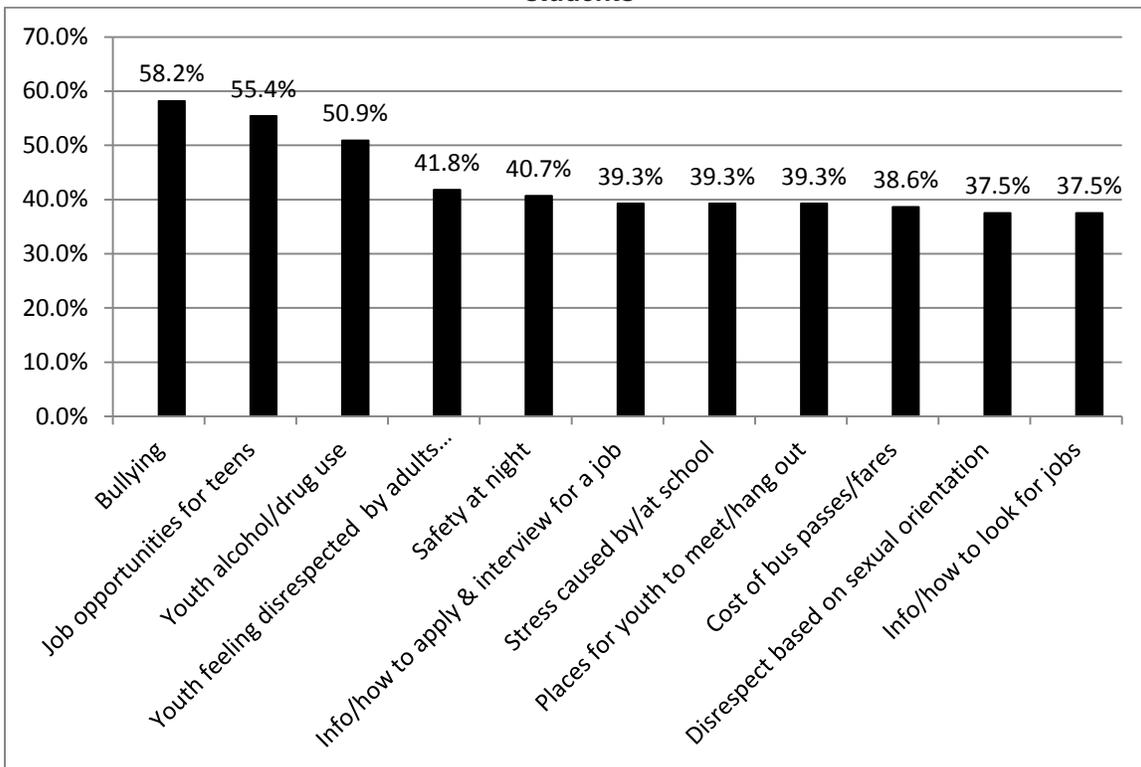


Figure 3. Most frequently mentioned issues needing “lots more attention”, high school students

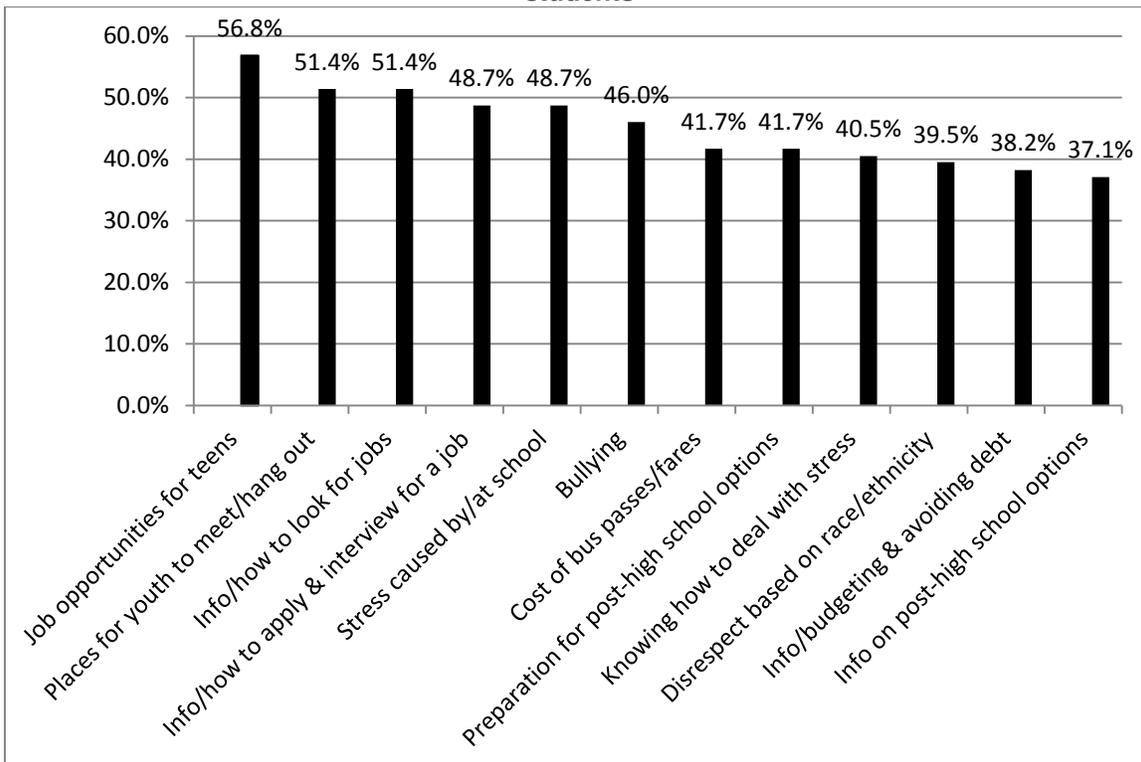


Figure 4. Most frequently mentioned issues needing “lots more attention”, males

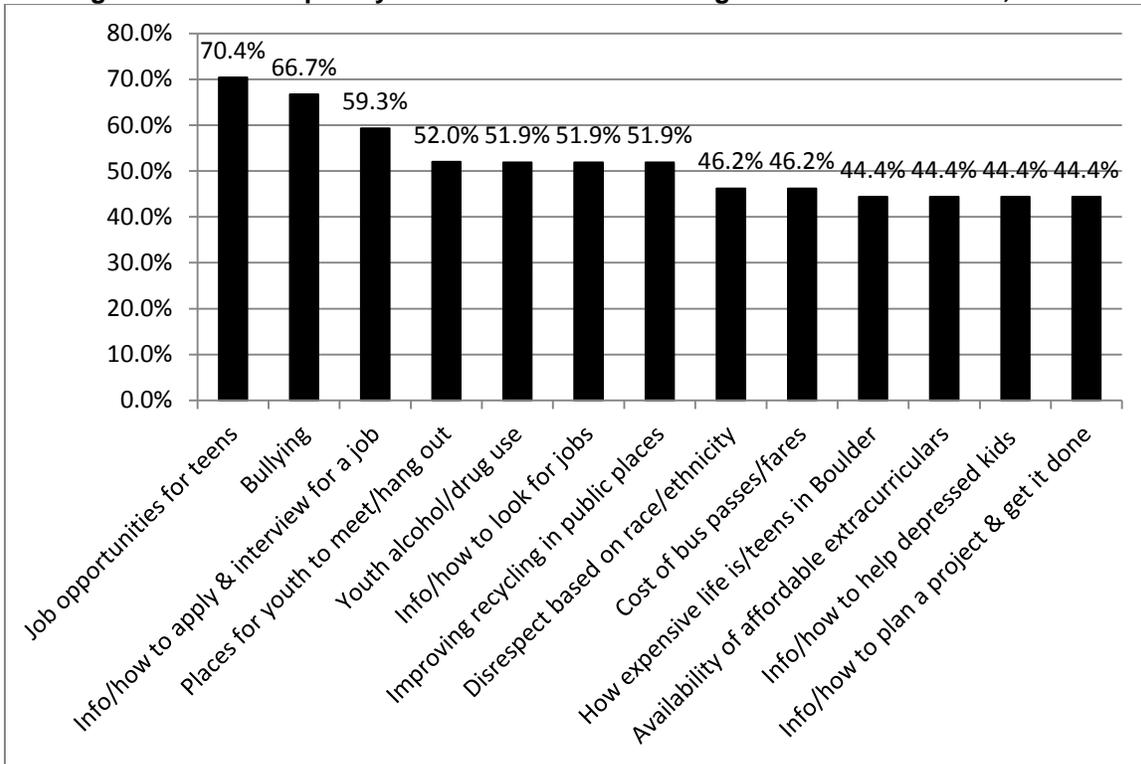


Figure 5. Most frequently mentioned issues needing “lots more attention”, females

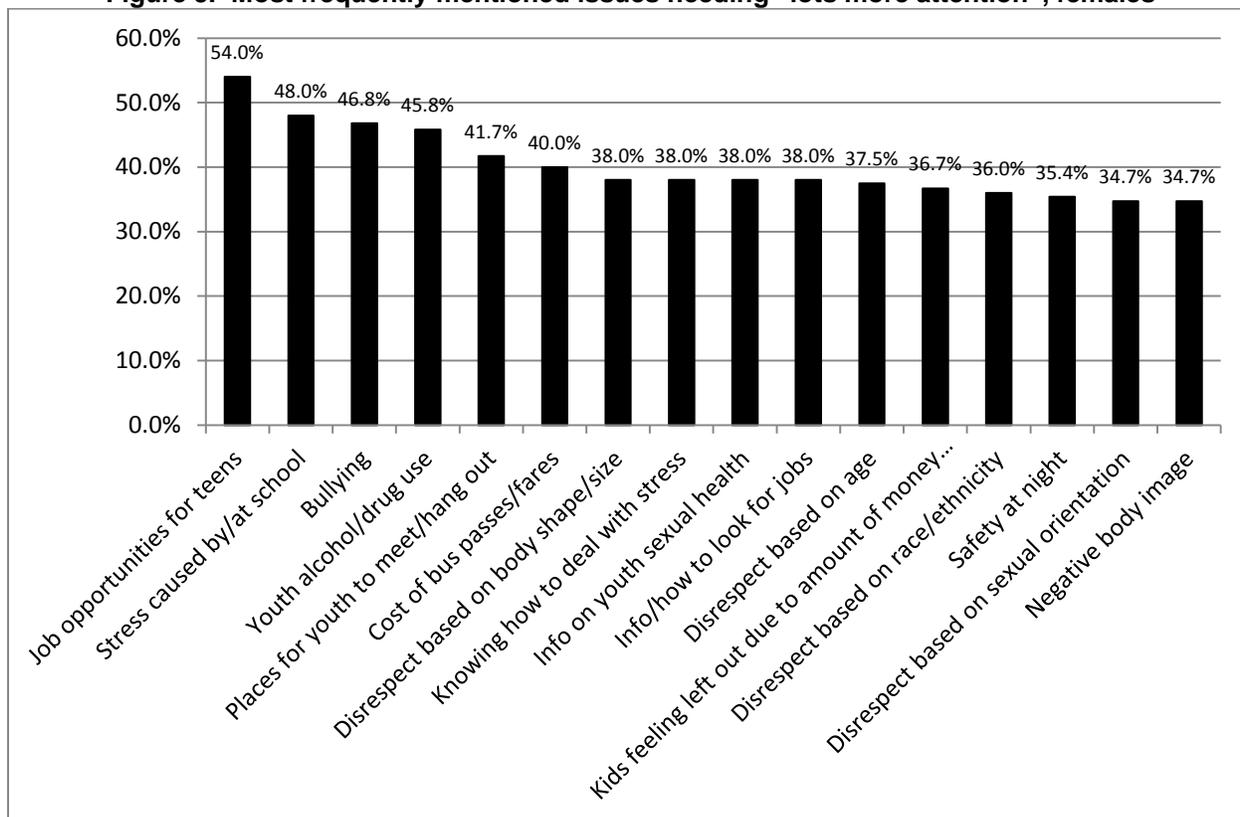


Table 2. Other youth needs/issues that need more attention (most frequent responses)

What did we miss? (31 responded)	%
Help with school	16.1%
Teen alcohol/drug use	9.7%
Better food in school cafeteria	6.5%
Teen employment	6.5%
Homelessness	6.5%
Health issues, how to take care of yourself	6.5%
Making friends	6.5%

Figure 6. Most frequently mentioned top-three priorities, all students

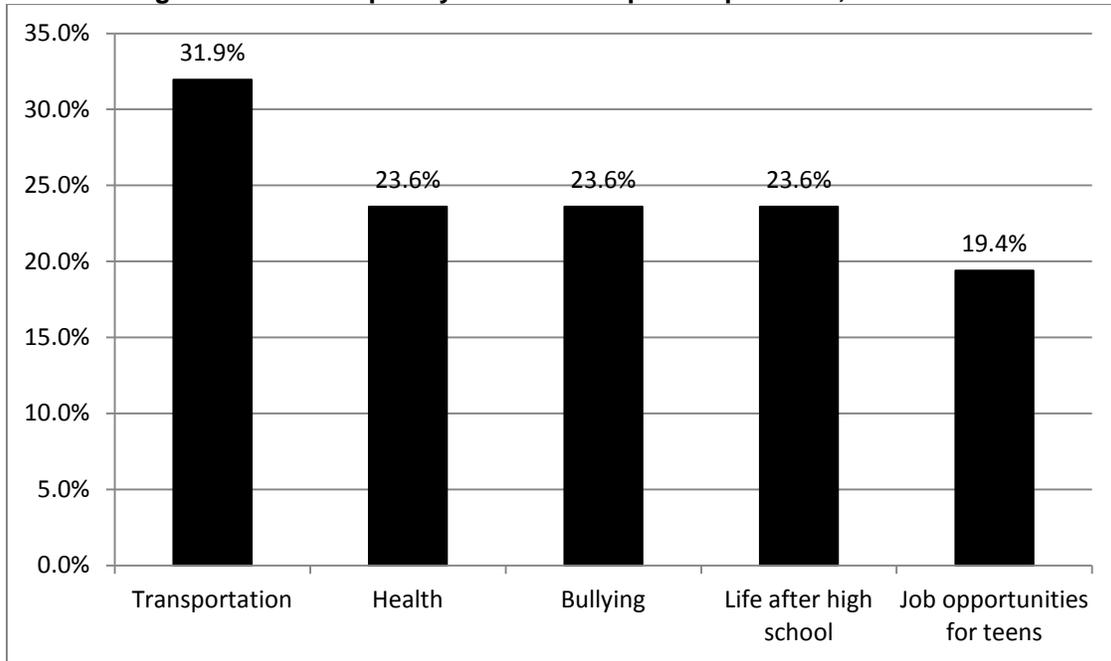


Figure 7. Most frequently mentioned top-three priorities, middle school and high school students

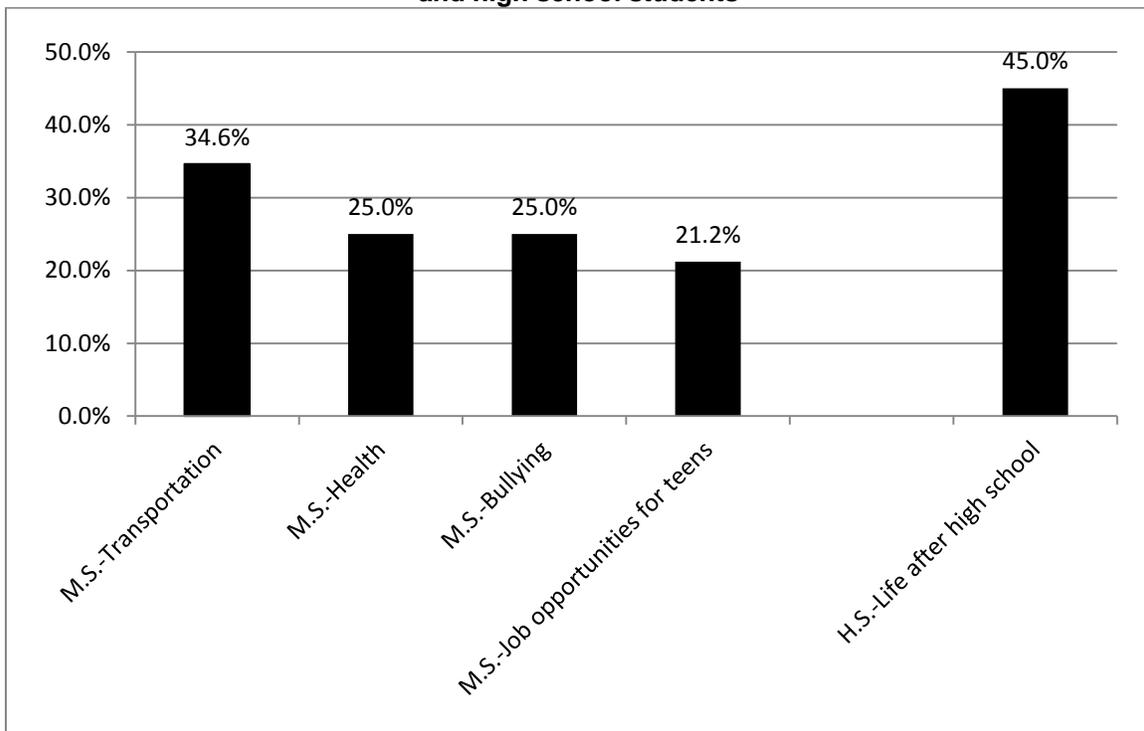


Figure 8. Most frequently mentioned top-three priorities, males

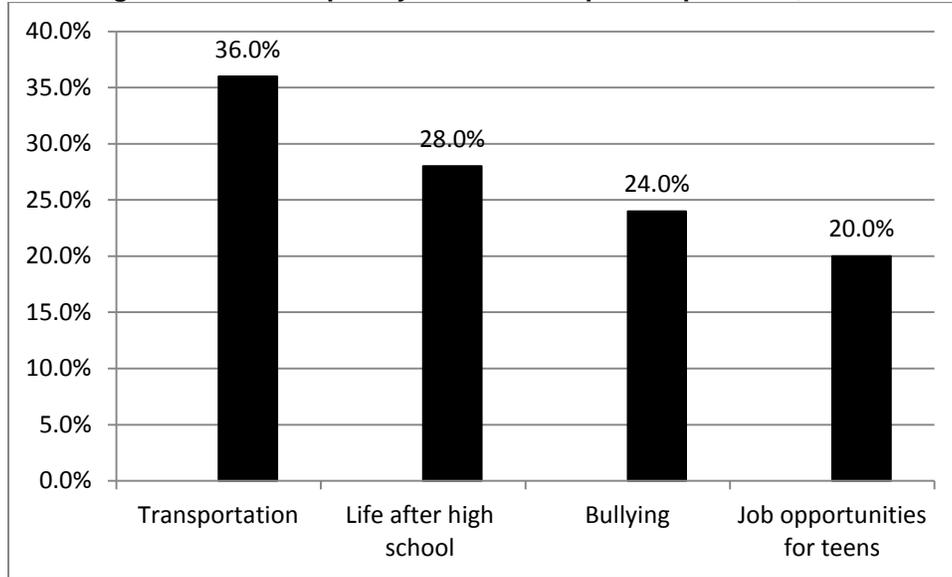


Figure 9. Most frequently mentioned top-three priorities, females

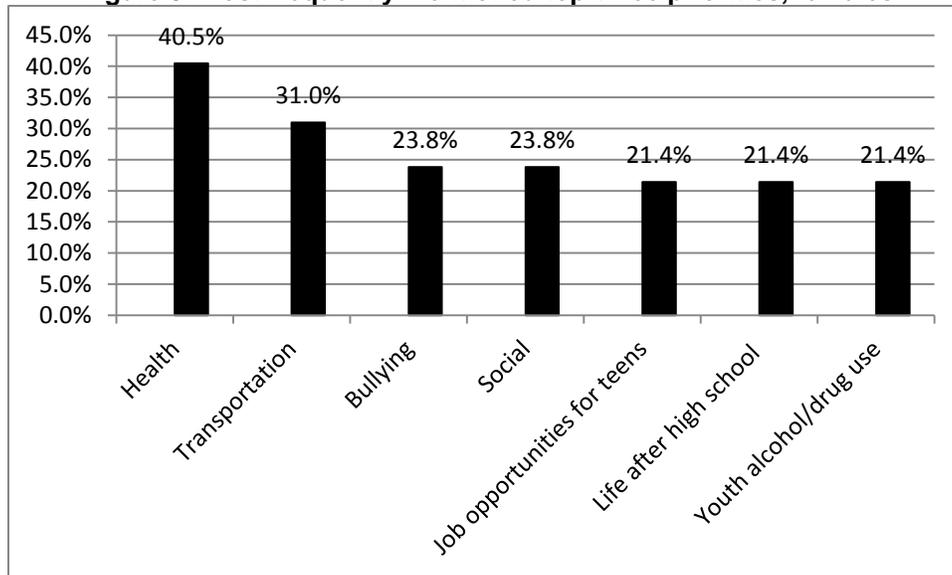


Table 3. Most frequent suggestions for addressing top-three priorities

Top three priority	Suggestions
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce cost of bus fare to school or bus fare in general ▪ Provide school bus passes
Life after high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More information on college ▪ Help studying for college
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learn about your body ▪ Club or group ▪ Workshops
Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talk to teens ▪ Talk to bully ▪ Teach how not to bully, how to prevent bullying ▪ Club or group
Job opportunities for teens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More information ▪ Club or group

Figure 10. Use of on-line youth space: percent saying “yes”

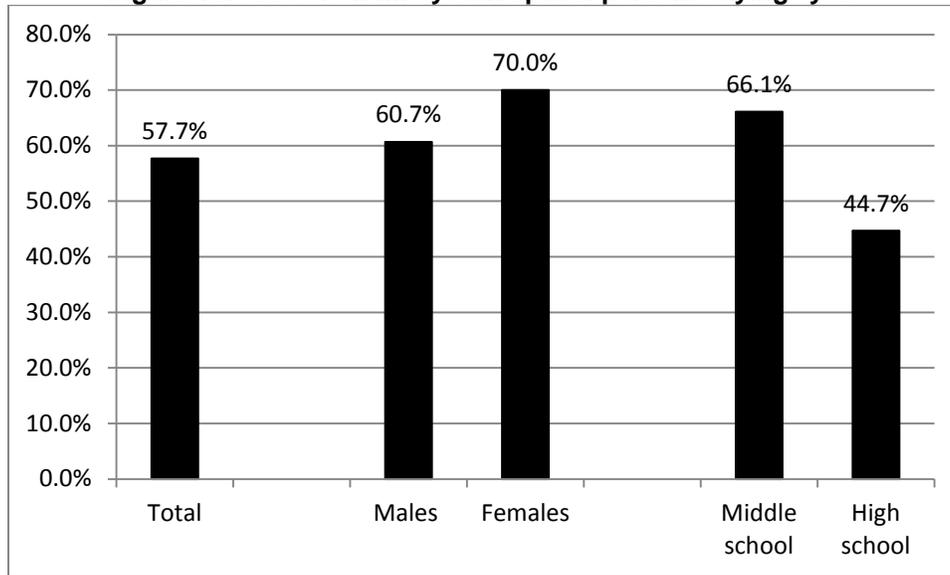


Table 4. What do you like best about being a youth in Boulder?

(63 responded)	%
Lots of activities, opportunities	19.0%
The community, the people, friendly	19.0%
Good schools, education, my school	17.5%
Support, help that is available	11.1%
Outdoors activities, active lifestyle, sports	6.3%
Natural beauty	4.8%
Opportunities to help others	4.8%
Friends, social life	4.8%
Eco-conscious	3.2%
Safety and freedom/independence	1.6%
Things are accessible (biking, walking, bus)	1.6%

Appendix Tables

Table A-1. Percentage rating issue as needing “lots more attention” by school level*

	Middle school	High school	Total
Cost of movie tickets	23.2%	18.9%	21.5%
Availability of affordable extracurricular activities	29.1%	19.4%	25.3%
Number/variety of night life opportunities	25.9%	18.2%	23.1%
Number youth-oriented shopping opportunities	24.1%	15.8%	20.7%
Opportunities to learn about people in Boulder from different cultures	27.3%	13.9%	22.0%
Places for youth to meet/hang out	39.3%	51.4%	44.0%
Safety at night	40.7%	23.7%	33.7%
How expensive life is/teens in Boulder	33.3%	32.4%	33.0%
Youth alcohol/drug use	50.9%	31.6%	43.0%
Bullying	58.2%	46.0%	55.3%
Youth feeling disrespected by adults (non-family)	41.8%	27.0%	35.9%
Disrespect based on age	30.0%	32.4%	31.0%
Disrespect based on race/ethnicity	35.7%	39.5%	37.2%
Disrespect based on body shape/size	34.6%	34.2%	34.4%
Disrespect based on sexual orientation	37.5%	24.3%	32.3%
Disrespect based on gender	32.7%	29.7%	31.5%
Disrespect-lack of money	34.6%	30.6%	33.0%
Resources to deal with conflicts with peers/adults	17.9%	18.9%	18.3%
Negative interactions/HS students & CU students	16.7%	8.1%	13.2%
HS students partying at CU/The Hill	19.6%	24.3%	21.5%
Kids feeling left out due to amount of money they have	32.1%	33.3%	32.6%
Negative body image	33.9%	24.3%	30.1%
Stressed caused by/at school	39.3%	48.7%	43.0%
Stress caused by life outside school	25.0%	26.3%	25.5%
Knowing how to deal with stress	32.1%	40.5%	35.5%
Youth feeling depressed/suicidal	32.1%	34.2%	33.0%
Info/how to help depressed kids	37.5%	44.7%	40.4%
Info on youth sexual health	33.9%	30.6%	32.6%
Info/accessing youth sexual health services	21.5%	27.8%	23.9%
Info/volunteering, internships	21.4%	26.3%	23.4%
Job opportunities for teens	55.4%	56.8%	55.9%
Info/how to look for jobs	37.5%	51.4%	43.0%
Info/how to apply & interview for a job	39.3%	48.7%	43.0%
Opportunities/places to display art work	15.8%	11.4%	14.1%
Opportunities to perform	21.4%	28.6%	24.2%
Community-based music/art/dance classes	25.0%	33.3%	28.3%
Education/environmental issues	19.0%	22.2%	20.2%
Improving recycling in public places	36.2%	26.5%	32.6%
Cost of bus passes/fares	38.6%	41.7%	39.8%
Bus routes & schedules	36.8%	25.0%	32.6%
Safety on RTD buses	35.1%	20.6%	29.7%
Safety walking to/from RTD bus stops	36.8%	14.3%	28.3%
Inadequate parking at schools	21.1%	16.7%	19.4%
Info on post-high school options	17.2%	37.1%	24.7%
Preparation for post-high school options	19.6%	41.7%	28.3%
Info/budgeting & avoiding debt	12.5%	38.2%	22.2%
Info/time management	14.0%	32.4%	20.9%
Info/how to plan a project & get it done	22.8%	29.4%	25.3%

* The top quarter of percentages needing “lots more attention” are shaded.

Table A-2. Percentage rating issue as needing “no attention” by school level*

	Middle school	High school	Total
Cost of movie tickets	33.9%	24.3%	30.1%
Availability of affordable extracurricular activities	18.2%	0.0%	11.0%
Number/variety of night life opportunities	13.8%	6.1%	11.0%
Number youth-oriented shopping opportunities	25.9%	13.2%	20.7%
Opportunities to learn about people in Boulder from different cultures	20.0%	11.1%	16.5%
Places for youth to meet/hang out	23.2%	8.6%	17.6%
Safety at night	22.2%	18.4%	20.7%
How expensive life is/teens in Boulder	19.6%	8.1%	14.8%
Youth alcohol/drug use	21.8%	10.5%	17.2%
Bullying	20.0%	13.5%	17.4%
Youth feeling disrespected by adults (non-family)	23.6%	16.2%	20.7%
Disrespect based on age	24.0%	13.5%	19.5%
Disrespect based on race/ethnicity	21.4%	5.3%	14.9%
Disrespect based on body shape/size	16.4%	10.5%	14.0%
Disrespect based on sexual orientation	25.0%	10.8%	19.4%
Disrespect based on gender	34.6%	21.6%	29.4%
Disrespect-lack of money	21.8%	22.2%	22.0%
Resources to deal with conflicts with peers/adults	28.6%	13.5%	22.6%
Negative interactions/HS students & CU students	29.6%	16.2%	24.2%
HS students partying at CU/The Hill	32.1%	24.3%	29.0%
Kids feeling left out due to amount of money they have	21.4%	25.0%	22.8%
Negative body image	25.0%	10.8%	19.4%
Stressed caused by/at school	12.5%	5.4%	9.7%
Stress caused by life outside school	26.8%	7.9%	19.2%
Knowing how to deal with stress	25.0%	8.1%	18.3%
Youth feeling depressed/suicidal	25.0%	13.2%	20.2%
Info/how to help depressed kids	23.2%	13.2%	19.2%
Info on youth sexual health	26.8%	8.3%	19.6%
Info/accessing youth sexual health services	26.9%	13.9%	21.6%
Info/volunteering, internships	23.2%	10.5%	18.1%
Job opportunities for teens	1.8%	5.4%	3.2%
Info/how to look for jobs	21.4%	10.8%	17.2%
Info/how to apply & interview for a job	14.3%	5.4%	10.8%
Opportunities/places to display art work	33.3%	20.0%	28.3%
Opportunities to perform	28.6%	17.1%	24.2%
Community-based music/art/dance classes	14.3%	13.9%	14.1%
Education/environmental issues	32.8%	22.2%	28.7%
Improving recycling in public places	13.8%	11.8%	13.0%
Cost of bus passes/fares	14.0%	13.9%	14.0%
Bus routes & schedules	26.3%	18.8%	23.6%
Safety on RTD buses	29.8%	29.4%	29.7%
Safety walking to/from RTD bus stops	26.3%	34.3%	29.4%
Inadequate parking at schools	31.6%	19.4%	26.9%
Info on post-high school options	17.2%	5.7%	12.9%
Preparation for post-high school options	21.4%	8.3%	16.3%
Info/budgeting & avoiding debt	26.8%	2.9%	17.8%
Info/time management	29.8%	5.9%	20.9%
Info/how to plan a project & get it done	28.1%	5.9%	19.8%

* The top quarter of percentages needing “lots more attention” are shaded.